

Dual Enrollment Task Force Report: Overview

Submitted to the P-20 Committee of the
Montana Board of Education

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Montana's schools, colleges, and universities are committed to providing high school students with access to college-level courses and/or awarding college credit for college-level proficiencies acquired during high school. A broad array of programs and services serve those purposes in Montana today. Among them are such well-known models as the College Board's Advanced Placement examination and related curriculum, Tech Prep, dual enrollment programs, and various testing-for-credit options.

All of these opportunities have value for high school students planning to attend college. However, mindful of its charge, the Dual Enrollment Task Force limited its review and recommendations to dual enrollment, defined as "the opportunity for high school students to take college coursework while they are enrolled in high school."

Framework for Recommendations

"The Dual Enrollment Task Force was charged by the P20 Committee of the Board of Education to examine current dual enrollment programs with emphasis on definition, eligibility, requirements, timelines and costs. "

In its deliberations, the Dual Enrollment Task Force began by reaching consensus on the potential benefits of dual enrollment opportunities, as well as the legitimate concerns such programming can raise. The Task Force then framed recommendations designed to maximize the benefits and minimize concerns about dual enrollment opportunities. The benefits and concerns are listed here and referenced by outline letter and number in the recommendations that accompany this document. The task force

members represented both secondary and postsecondary administrators, registrars, program directors as well as staff from the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education and the Office of Public Instruction.

BENEFITS of Dual Enrollment

“...Dual enrollment provides an attractive alternative to the phenomenon of the “lost senior year...”

1. Students expedite their progress toward a college degree by earning as much as one year’s worth of college credit while still in high school; thus, dual enrollment provides an attractive alternative to the phenomenon of the “lost senior year,” during which many seniors, having completed high school graduation requirements, fail to remain engaged academically with a substantive academic schedule.
2. Students and their parents reduce the cost of a college education through (a) reduced tuition for dual enrollment courses and (b) reduced room, board, and other costs related to relocating to a college campus after high school to complete the degree.
3. Students have the opportunity to experience post-secondary education while still in high school, easing the transition from high school to college.
4. Students with unique interests or exceptional abilities have access to a broader array of curriculum choices in academic and/or career/technical areas than the high school alone can offer without adding staff.
5. Students who are unchallenged, unmotivated, or dissatisfied in the traditional high school setting may flourish in a different educational setting.
6. Proactive dual enrollment programs provide mechanisms (e.g., teacher referral, ACT test results) for early identification, advising, and provision of appropriate learning opportunities not only for students well-prepared for college, but also for students who need to be better prepared if postsecondary education is their goal.
7. Highly qualified, high-quality high school and/or college faculty have opportunities for professional growth and additional income.
8. High school and college faculty in the same disciplines engage in an ongoing, meaningful dialogue about the course work and students “at the seam” between high school and college, leading to improved understanding, communication, instruction, and coordination in both sectors.
9. Dual enrollment programs provide a mechanism for collaboration between K-12 and college counselors, admissions offices, administrators, and **policy-makers**.

CONCERNS about Dual Enrollment

“Access must not be limited by a student’s socioeconomic status, postsecondary goals, or proximity to a postsecondary institution.”

1. The high school curriculum and the high school experience itself are designed to achieve local and state learner goals and to prepare students for a broader range of options and roles than “going to college.”
2. The college course and experience assumes a student capable of and committed to a certain level of rigor and personal responsibility. To achieve the maximum benefit, dual enrollment coursework must have college-level rigor and expectations for both students and faculty and result in transcribed grades and credit.
3. Dual enrollment courses are an addition to high school learning opportunities, not a replacement of essential high school courses or disciplines.
4. Access to dual enrollment opportunities must not be limited by a student’s socioeconomic status, postsecondary goals, or proximity to a postsecondary institution.
5. Dual enrollment coursework, whether dual-credit or college-credit-only, must be taught by faculty whose credentials and qualifications align with established standards.
6. Dual enrollment programs in Montana must be sufficiently consistent in policy and practice to facilitate public awareness efforts, student planning, institutional provision of services, legal and regulatory compliance, and the appropriate development and interpretation of policy.
7. Various site-specific circumstances – e.g., college class caps, enrollment levels, transportation, scheduling, risk management – are best addressed at the local level through interlocal agreements between high schools and colleges.
9. State funding practices must ensure that neither the high school nor the college collaborating in dual enrollment programming loses revenue as a result.
10. Policies and procedures should be designed to help students succeed in coursework that will appropriately expedite their progress toward their postsecondary educational goals.

Dual Enrollment Task Force Recommendations

The Dual Enrollment Task Force responded to its charge by making recommendations designed to maximize the potential benefits and to minimize the legitimate concerns related to dual enrollment opportunities. The benefits and concerns identified by the committee are enumerated in the Overview accompanying this document. They are referenced parenthetically after the recommendations made below as a guide to the decision-making process of the task force.

I. Recommendations on Terms and Definitions

Colleges and school districts providing dual enrollment opportunities in Montana will adopt the following terms and definitions statewide. Dual Enrollment is defined by the U. S. Department of Education (2004) as the opportunity for high school students to take college coursework while they are enrolled in high school.”

“Dual Enrollment—the opportunity for high school students to take college coursework while they are enrolled in high school. “

Two basic types of dual enrollment courses are the focus of the task force’s recommendations—

A dual-credit course, which awards both high school credit and college credit for the same course taken by the high school student.

A college-credit-only course, which awards college credit, but not high school credit, for a college course taken by the high school student.

It is important to recognize that, whether dual-credit or college-credit-only, these courses can be provided in the high school, at the college, online, through interactive video, at alternative sites, and at alternative times – including summer, evenings, and weekends.

II. Recommendations on Dual Enrollment Policy and Practice

A. Curriculum Issues

1. Typical college courses eligible for dual enrollment, whether offered for dual credit or for college credit only, will be at the 100 and 200 levels. Higher-level classes may be approved in individual cases, dependent upon recommendations and agreements between the school district and the college. (*Benefits 1, 3, 4; Concern 2*)

2. Dual-credit courses must meet the content and performance standards for the local district curriculum, as well as the objectives in the syllabus of the college

course (*Concerns 1, 2*). Dual-credit courses should be approved and periodically reviewed by appropriately qualified personnel from the school district and the providing higher education institution to ensure the appropriateness of course content, delivery, and assessment. (*Benefits 8, 9; Concerns 1, 2*)

3. College-credit-only courses must use essentially the same syllabus that is used for other sections of the college course. Although the course outline and schedule may vary (*Concern 7*), the outcomes, assessment, and bases for evaluation must be the same. (*Benefit 3; Concern 2*)

“...the dual-credit offering cannot be the sole source available to the high school’s students for fulfilling the requirement...”

4. Dual-credit courses will be provided as attractive additions to the educational options available to **individual** high school students, not as replacements of the high school curriculum for all high school students. Therefore, when a dual-credit course is offered to meet a specific high school graduation requirement (e.g., U.S. History; 1 credit of Practical Arts), the **dual-credit offering cannot be the sole source** available to the high school’s students for fulfilling the requirement and **cannot be used by a school district to fulfill its obligation to provide the high school curriculum.** (*Benefits 1, 2, 3, 4, 5; Concerns 1, 3, 9*)

5. To extend access to dual enrollment to areas without a higher education institution nearby, distance-delivered dual enrollment opportunities and best practices for delivering dual enrollment courses at a distance should be developed and publicized. Unless modified by the joint committee referenced in B2, distance-delivered dual-credit courses must meet all the requirements of ARM 10.55.907. (*Concerns 4, 5*)

B. Faculty Issues

1. In addition to meeting the minimum qualifications for faculty established by the Board of Regents, current practices require K-12 licensure for the teacher of a dual-credit course in the high school setting and adherence to ARM 55.907 for distance-delivered courses. Otherwise, teachers of dual-credit courses are required only to meet the minimum qualifications for faculty established by the Board of Regents. Until the process described below in II.B.2 is completed, those practices will continue. (*Concerns 1, 2, 5*)

“This committee will also determine how the provisions of ARM 10.55.907 apply to dual-credit courses offered through distance delivery.”

2. An ad hoc committee jointly appointed by CSPAC and OCHE will develop processes that facilitate cross-preparation of faculty in both sectors and/or provide appropriate oversight for teachers of dual-credit courses when either K12 licensure requirements or Board of Regents’ minimum

qualifications for faculty are not met (*Concern 5*). This committee will also determine how the provisions of ARM 10.55.907 apply to dual-credit courses offered through distance delivery. (*Concerns 4, 5, 6*)

3. Faculty in the discipline at both high school and college levels should be integrally involved in the approval process for dual-credit courses. (*Benefit 8; Concerns 1, 2*)

4. Colleges should include high school faculty teaching dual enrollment courses in the professional development opportunities they provide; high schools should extend the same opportunities to college faculty of dual enrollment courses. (*Benefits 7, 8*)

C. Student Issues

1. Counseling and advising of prospective students by school officials, counselors, teachers, and parents will be an integral part of all dual enrollment programs. (*Benefits 6, 9; Concerns 9, 10*)

2. With the exceptions listed at the end of this recommendation, to be eligible for a dual enrollment course, the student must (*Concerns 9, 10*):

- be enrolled in a high school which has a current interlocal dual enrollment agreement with the higher education institution
- be at least 16 years of age or a high school junior (*Concern 2*)
- have successfully completed the required high school classes at that grade level and be on target for high school graduation
- meet the same requirements for admission that on-campus students must meet (**other than the high school diploma**)
- meet the same prerequisites required of on-campus students for courses that require specific placement tests, scores, or prerequisite courses (*Concern 2*)
- have approval signatures of a parent or guardian and a designated high school official (*Benefit 4, 5; Concern 6*)

“...the high school's designated official and the college's designated official must concur that the student can benefit from dual enrollment...”

Exceptional circumstances may exist for individual students. When students do not meet one or more of the dual enrollment eligibility requirements listed above, in the specific course(s), the high school's designated official and the college's designated official must concur that the student can benefit from dual enrollment can

learn at the collegiate level in each course, and can manage the combined high school and college course load. (*Benefits 4, 5; Concerns 4, 10*)

3. High school students should not displace adult students in dual enrollment courses. (*Concern 7*)

4. Students will be responsible for their own transportation unless the interlocal agreement establishes other arrangements. (*Concerns 2, 10*)

5. Dual enrollment opportunities provided in Montana, whether dual-credit or college-credit-only, will comply with all FERPA guidelines. (*Benefit 9; Concerns 6, 10*)

6. Students admitted under dual enrollment do not qualify for federal financial aid for higher education, but are considered course enrollees. (*Concern 6*)

“They should have all appropriate student services and privileges that are available to all other students of the institution.”

7. Students taking dual enrollment courses will receive the same level of institutional support that regularly enrolled students receive. They should have all appropriate student services and privileges that are available to all other students of the institution. When dual enrollment programs are based at the high school or another off-campus site,

the high school will assist the college in providing these services, which include, but are not limited to, an orientation on college enrollment, placement testing, academic assistance, access to media services, career counseling, and enrollment advisement. (*Benefits 3, 6, 9; Concerns 2, 9, 10*)

D. Administrative Issues

1. A template of an interlocal agreement will be created for statewide use. Interlocal agreements should address, at a minimum (*Concerns 1, 6, 7, 10*):

- assumption of costs for tuition and mandatory fees, supplies, equipment, and special course or program fees
- requirements, policies, practices, and procedures governing attendance, grading standards, student conduct, and other campus-specific issues
- deadline for students to inform institutions of intent to enroll
- timelines for registration, drop, withdrawal
- expectations for transportation

2. To maximize awareness of dual enrollment opportunities, courses available for dual enrollment will be clearly identified in the publications for the participating college and high school. (*Benefits 6, 9; Concerns 4, 10*)

3. At the state level, consistency and compliance should be ensured through (*Benefit 9; Concern 6*):

- template for the student application form, which can be customized for local circumstances, but is basically the same form used statewide;

- common method of indicating a dual credit course on high school transcripts—e.g., the initials “DC” by the dual credit course on the high school transcript;
- information about dual enrollment opportunities in publications and web sites of the Office of Public Instruction and the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education, as well as the Board of Public Education and the Board of Regents of Higher Education;
- annual OPI/OCHE review of the dual enrollment offerings in the state, the numbers of students enrolled in them, and the numbers of students successfully completing dual enrollment courses.

Equality of access to dual enrollment programs should be assured through outreach efforts to targeted populations—e.g., rural students, low-income students, minority students. (*Benefits 1, 2, 3, 6; Concerns 4, 6*)

4. Administrators in both high school and college settings will create student support services to ensure that dual enrollment students have access to academic resources (e.g., library materials) and student services (e.g., orientation, advising, procedural information) that are important to the class and available to adult students taking the same course. (*Benefits 6, 9; Concerns 9, 10*)

5. College administrators will ensure that dual enrollment students are accorded the same privileges and opportunities available to adult students taking the same course or courses. (*Benefits 3, 4, 5; Concern 4*)

E. Fiscal Issues

“The Task Force recommends that (a) student costs for both tuition and mandatory fees in dual enrollment classes are reduced by at least 50%...”

Dual enrollment courses should be provided at significantly reduced costs to high school students. Ideally, the same percentage of tuition reduction should be used statewide (*Benefit 2; Concern 6*). The Task Force recommends that (a) student costs for both tuition and mandatory fees in dual enrollment classes are reduced by at least 50% and (b) the responsibility for the remaining tuition and mandatory fees be addressed in the interlocal

agreement. (*Benefit 6; Concerns 6, 7*)

Schools providing dual enrollment programming, whether dual-credit or college credit-only in type should continue to receive at least the level of ANB and FTE-based funding that they would receive without the programming. (*Concern 8*)

Cost issues dependent on local arrangements e.g., *program fees*, books, equipment, insurance, etc. should be resolved through interlocal agreements

between the high school and college, with affordability, equity, and access for students the key considerations. (*Benefit 2; Concerns 4, 7*)

Several recommendations made elsewhere in this document also have fiscal implications. They include, but may not be limited to:

- developing distance-delivered dual enrollment opportunities (see II.A.5, above)
- developing and implementing cross-training and/or oversight mechanisms to orient faculty without standard credentials in one sector (e.g., college) with best practice in dual enrollment instruction (see II.B.2)
- developing and implementing those provisions of 10.55.907 deemed to apply to dual enrollment courses delivered at a distance (see II.B.2)
- initial and ongoing inservice to orient high school and college counselors and admissions personnel to concerns, benefits, guidelines and procedures for facilitating dual enrollment
- efforts to inform students and parents about dual enrollment opportunities in their communities and to publicize dual enrollment in Montana

III. Recommendation on Changes in Practice, Statute and Policy

“The Task Force believes that these changes can be made without eroding the quality of education that Montana students receive, whether in high school or in college.”

To ensure that dual enrollment opportunities are widely available to Montana high school students—regardless of their socioeconomic status, their postsecondary goals, or their proximity to a higher education institution—changes in practice, statute, and policy must be made. The Task Force believes that these changes can be made without eroding the quality of education that Montana students receive, whether in high school or in college.

At a minimum, the following statutes and policies must be reviewed to ensure a rational framework for affordable, accessible, and effective dual enrollment in Montana:

- “Running Start” statute in School Laws of Montana (20-9-706)
- K-12 licensure requirements for teachers of dual-credit courses
- Board of Regents Policies 720 and 730.6, establishing the minimum qualifications of faculty in Montana’s community and technical colleges
- ARM 10.55.907, addressing requirements for distance-delivered courses in the high school setting

Significantly, none of the changes proposed in the recommendations above are without precedent in Montana. Moreover, the recommended changes reflect best practices for dual enrollment identified by states with well-established, successful dual enrollment programs.